



The Update:

News and Information for MA Early Intervention Providers

May 2012

Welcome to the Spring Edition of "The Update." This is a periodic newsletter focusing specifically on issues and information in MA Early Intervention. This issue highlights Local Determinations; Upcoming EIIS Updates; Billing Questions/Clarifications; Reminder: Universal Approach to Addressing the Social Emotional Needs of Children Enrolled in EI; Provisional Certification; and, Out of State Referrals

Local Determinations

The Department of Public Health, as lead agency for Early Intervention in Massachusetts, is required to make "local determinations" on program performance. In determining how well Massachusetts Early Intervention Programs meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Office of Special Education Programs requires that we use the most recent Annual Report data from four compliance Indicators in the State Performance Plan.

Determination Results

The following is a summary of the FY 11 local program determinations:

- Exceptional Performance – 3 programs
- Meets Requirements – 44 programs
- Needs Assistance – 11 programs
- Needs Intervention – 0 programs
- Needs Substantial Intervention – 0 programs



Exceptional Performance

Programs that demonstrated 100% in all four Compliance Indicators and were at or above the state average under all other indicators received an Exceptional Performance determination:

- Greater Fall River Early Intervention Program**
- Kennedy Donovan Early Intervention Program/Attleboro**
- Taunton Area Early Intervention Program**

Programs that demonstrated 100% in all four Compliance Indicators for four years in a row:

- Children's Community Early Intervention Program**
- Criterion – Wachusett Early Intervention Program**
- May Center for Early Intervention**
- Minute Man Arc for Human Services, Inc.**
- South Bay Early Intervention Program - Brockton**
- Taunton Area Early Intervention Program**

Congratulations to all the programs on your hard work and continuous improvement to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.



DPH New Hires

The Department is pleased to announce that **Susan Murray** has been hired as the **Northeast/Boston Regional Early Intervention Specialist** effective April 2, 2012. Sue has numerous years of experience working in the Early Intervention system as a Service Coordinator, Team Leader, and Program Director. She has experience providing education and training that addresses the needs of early intervention providers and possesses strong leadership skills.

The Department will be filling the **Southeast Regional Specialist** position by the end of May. The Northeast and Southeast Regional Specialist (once hired) will provide technical assistance and support to the programs previously in the Boston/Metro regions.

Upcoming EIIS Updates

The following two EIIS updates are scheduled to be implemented in the next few months and will entail EIIS form changes:

Evaluation, IFSP & Discharge Updates

- Evaluation: Children between birth and one month of age will be reported as eligible in EIIS if using the Battelle where a developmental quotient is equal to or less than 77.
- IFSP: The addition of a Service Coordination question will be added and Child Group and Parent/Child Group will be replaced with Community Group and EI Only Group.
- Discharge: The Transition Plan question will be enhanced to include the date transition plan was fully completed in order to comply with federal data collection requirements. Timely compliance of transition plan completion will be reported for all fiscal year 2013 discharges.

- ⇒ EIIS form changes: IFSP, page 1; Discharge, page 3.
- ⇒ Estimated month of implementation: late May/early June 2012

Specialty Services Update

A Specialty Service form will be included in EIIS in order to capture information for children receiving intensive home-based autism services. Currently this information is submitted to DPH by each of the Specialty Service providers.

- ⇒ EIIS form changes: New Specialty Services form.
- ⇒ Estimated month of implementation: late May/early June 2012

Additional details about these updates will be sent to programs prior to implementation. Questions or concerns regarding upcoming EIIS updates can be addressed to Jean Shimer at (617) 624-5526 or jean.shimer@state.ma.us.

Billing Questions/Clarifications

◆ **Home Visit/Assessment Billing Code**

If two staff of the same discipline participate in an IFSP home visit meeting, a request for reimbursement waiver does **not** need to be requested prior to service delivery. The service modifier will prevent these records from being rejected as duplicate claims.

If two staff of the same discipline participate in an assessment home visit, a request for reimbursement waiver **does** need to be requested prior to service delivery; otherwise, one of the services will be rejected by DPH as a duplicate.

The Department's guidance regarding the billing of assessment hours for a child who has exceeded their maximum 10 hours is to use home visit hours for these services. The program must adhere to the home visit billing requirements and not exceed 2.0 hours per session (page 21 and 22 of the DPH Billing Manual).

◆ **Determination of Ineligibility**

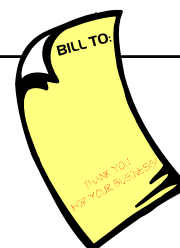
EIPs have adapted program specific protocols and procedures for providing written notice of the determination of eligibility and ineligibility for a child and family. Depending on program practice and protocols for providing written notice of the determination of ineligibility, an EIP may provide a home visit after the eligibility evaluation to discuss the results of the eligibility evaluation with the family, provide written notice of the results of the evaluation and share strategies and community resources to address concerns.

◆ **Fee Question – How is child support reflected in proof of income?**

The fee is assessed based on the proof of income submitted by the parent. Income verification is obtained by reviewing one of the following:

- * Most recent tax returns
- * Last 2 consecutive pay stubs/advice
- * Most recent W2(s) and/or 1099(s)
- * If none of the above is available, a parent may provide a written statement of salary or wages that documents the amount and how often you are paid by the employer.

If the family provides a tax return as income documentation, they do not need to provide any additional information regarding alimony/child support. For families where alimony/child support is their only income source, they should provide some form of documentation to that effect (e.g. copy of payment stubs/check) and have the staff person make a note on the income attestation form.



REMINDER: Universal Approach to Addressing the Social Emotional Needs of Children Enrolled in EI

Vision Statement: The Massachusetts EI system supports each child and family's social emotional well being and assists in achieving positive development in all children by recognizing and promoting children's earliest relationships and learning within the context of their family, community and culture. The system addresses the mental health of all children enrolled in EI using a consistent and universal approach to screen and support children and families.

This is a reminder that the timeline for implementation of a universal approach to screen and support children and families enrolled in the early intervention system utilizing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) or the Greenspan Social Emotional Growth Chart is **April 1, 2012**.

Universal screening is a key component of the vision and recommendations to address the social emotional well being of children and families enrolled in the Early Intervention system. The screening tool will assist providers to identify social and emotional strengths and needs and promote and nurture interactions between infants, toddlers and their caregivers. The tools allow staff to monitor the child's social emotional development, determine information/support services families may need and bridge communication between parents and professionals. The tools are easy to administer. The interview questions are parent-friendly, and the process of screening supports observations and development of IFSP outcomes.

Practice Recommendations regarding screening:

- ◇ Administer a social emotional tool during the assessment process, every six months or annually to encourage ongoing conversations with families regarding the social and emotional needs and strengths of the child and family. Programs may use the tool more frequently to facilitate conversation with families around social emotional development.
 - ◇ Use of the tool more than once and in conjunction with other service providers:
In EI the use of a screening tool is to promote relationships with families and to start the discussion. If a family does not want to repeat the tool, they have a right to refuse. The program should then obtain the appropriate release from the family to obtain the results for the screening from the other service providers, such as the pediatrician, Early Head Start program, etc. The recommendation is to use the screening tool on all children and reframe questions with families as appropriate; and offer families the options to complete or not.
 - ◇ Use of the ASQ:SE for infants under 3 months:
In consultation with one of the authors, the committee recommends use of the tool for children under the age of 3 months using applicable questions as a way to begin the conversation of social-emotional development with families. The author reported that the birth to three months age group was not included as it was felt that the research on concurrent validity would be difficult and somewhat spotty because there are few tools to use from birth.
- Administration of this tool by an EI clinician working closely with the family promotes a relationship that encourages an ongoing dialogue around a wide range of social emotional strengths and concerns.
 - It is important for EI clinicians to have conversations with all families around social emotional issues. The tool can be modified or adapted to meet the specific concerns of families whose children have complex needs and/or significant delays.
 - Information from the tool can be utilized in developing outcomes for the IFSP.
 - The screening tools may be used to support clinical judgment in the area of social-emotional development. The intent of developing a universal approach to screening for social emotional well being is to adequately address the needs of those children already enrolled in Early Intervention, not to identify additional children for the EI system.
 - The use of the ASQ: SE or Greenspan's Growth Chart does not preclude EIPs from using any other supplemental tools. EI providers always have the option of using other appropriate supplemental tools that best address the areas of concern.



Provisional Certification



All professional staff members who are providing direct service to children and families, employed directly or indirectly by an Early Intervention program (including salaried, contract/fee for services, or consultant/subcontract), are certified as Early Intervention Specialists by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. A Certification Tracking Form and required documentation must be submitted to the Department for all newly hired and returning staff at least two weeks before the date of hire. Early Intervention staff members may not bill for any Early Intervention service until Provisional Certification is approved.


The following are some tips for obtaining provisional certification on staff in a timely manner:

- Whenever possible, all tracking forms should be submitted electronically and in a Word document, or via fax. Electronic submission expedites the certification process.
- Direct service and billing for direct service is not allowed until Provisional Certification is awarded.
- All documentation should be readable. Faxed transcripts are often received all black, due to watermarks. Scan all documentation (EXCEPT the tracking form) and attach to an email whenever possible.
- Check transcripts for full dates of birth and full Social Security Numbers. Redact as necessary.
- Transcripts must contain (1) name of student, (2) name of institution of higher education, (3) degree awarded and (4) date degree was conferred.
- If requesting only a review of credentials, do NOT submit a completed tracking form. The completed tracking form with a date of hire makes it appear the person has been offered the position. They are then processed and entered into the personnel database. Programs must then notify DPH with a date of resignation.

If you offer someone a position and obtain Provisional Certification for them but they never start, please notify Susan Breen and Lynne Deschamps.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynne Deschamps at lynne.deschamps@state.ma.us

Out of State Referrals

 A child must be a Massachusetts resident under three years of age to be eligible for MA Early Intervention. The following should be taken into consideration with out of state referrals:

- ⇒ If a child is a resident of another state, the referring state would need to determine the child's eligibility under their eligibility criteria.
- ⇒ The referring state program would need to confirm with the family's insurance company that the insurance company would pay for services provided by a MA licensed clinician. The referring state program responsible for providing services would need to set up a contract with a Massachusetts approved EIP to provide the early intervention services.
- ⇒ The referring state would develop and be the "holder" of the IFSP and provide service coordination. The MA EIP would NOT write an IFSP.
- ⇒ The MA EIP could be a service provider listed on the IFSP, but the referring state would be responsible for oversight of the child's IFSP services.
- ⇒ The child would NOT be entered into the MA EIIS, the family would not be responsible to pay the fee if they fell into a fee category, and would not be counted in any way for child/family outcome reporting (NCSEAM family survey, child outcome reporting, any of the DPH EI required reports)
- ⇒ The MA EIP would submit a bill to the referring state program for services.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mary Dennehy-Colorusso for further clarification or any additional information at 978-851-7261 ext. 4016 or mary.dennehy-colorusso@state.ma.us.

Comments and questions to:
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